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ABSTRACT

Love which focuses on an emotional relationship involving some sense of committment and either an ongoing sexual relationship or the potential for such a relationship is viewed and defined in a variety of ways. Despite the fact that the major portion of a treatise on love devotes itself to a consideration of tendance in love (i.e. aquisitive, benevolent, acquisitive-benevolent), this categorization of the primary beneficiary is of little value in understanding love. Love is best understood as a decision, rather than a feeling or behavior. Empirical research on the dimensions of love points to a large general factor of love dependent on a cognitive evaluation that one is understood, and a feeling of competency and involvement in understanding the other. Feeling seems dependent on cognition rather than vice versa, and behavior, apart from verbalized behavior of acceptance, also plays a secondary role. A taxonomy shows in what way one definition of love differs from another. It becomes possible, therefore, to communicate these differences and to study their behavioral correlates. (Author/LBB)

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A Taxonomy of Love

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Without question the major preoccupation of the United States is love. Nc one can be certain when this love affair with love started, but ever since the advent of such a mass reflection of the popular mind as popular "hit" songs, their central theme has been love. From the mid-nineteenth century Stephen Foster's "I dream of Jeanie with the light brown hair" to the new century's "Come Josephine in my flying machine" to the 1930's when "Every little breeze seemed to whisper Louise" to the 1960's and "Celia you're breaking my heart" to the next century when we may suppose that a crooner will wail that "Zelda took a rocket trip with a concupiscent drip" love will be paramount.

Surveys have shown that our songs' preoccupation with love (Horton, 1957; Wilkinson, 1976) only reflects what the American public believes: "That love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage." In an Elmo Roper survey of 1966, 76 percent of the married national probability sample named love as one of the two major reasons for marrying, with the runnerup reason "desire for children" netting only 24 percent. Sex was a distant third, with 16 percent of the men and 8 percent of the women picking it as a major reason for marriage (Brown, 1967).

Important as love may be for marriage, we shall soon see that there is virtually no agreement on what love is. The word "love" is bandied about more promiscuously than almost any other word in the English

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language. We "love" Yorkshire pudding, a football team, our spouses, Uncle Vanya, babies, and the new restaurant that specializes in Beef Stroganoff.

In this paper, however, I shall restrict myself to a consideration of concepts of love by various authorities which focus on an emotional relationship involving some sense of commitment and either an ongoing sexual relationship or the potential for such a relationship. I shall attempt to investigate whether a taxonomy of love can reveal any insights into our understanding of love, or, if nothing else, will at least enable us to state more precisely which characteristics of love we have reference to when the term "love" is used.

Several dimensions suggest themselves as possibilities for enlarging our understanding of love: immediate origins, primary intended beneficiary, nature of love, and the developmental stages. Each of these dimensions will be discussed and evaluated. I shall also evaluate some empirical studies on the dimensions of love. Last, some conclusions will be drawn about what love is and whether a taxonomy serves any useful purpose.

Origins

Most theorists focus on the mother-infant relationship as the prototype of all love relationships. Much has been written by Freud (1952), Sullivan (1953), Harlow (1971) and countless others on how various interaction patterns lead to differing kinds of pathological development or strengths of personality development including the capacity to love. However, in the present paper it is my intention to focus specifically on the immediate origins of love among adults. A review of the literature on love suggests four categories of origins: personality deficits, personality adequacy or even superadequacy, physical arousal, and the influence of societal norms.

Personality Inadequacy

Some individuals (Casler, 1974; Freud, 1952; Reik, 1974; Martinson, 1955, 1959) have attempted to portray the need for love as a sign of inadequacy. Casler states that he does not believe that it is pathological to love, but the need to love is. "Love is the fear of losing an important source of need gratification" (1974, p. 10). In sum, "a person who does not have the inner resources to stand alone can usually impose himself upon someone who is equally incapacitated" (1974, p. 7).

Martinson concerns himself with the need to marry, but this need may be seen from the context in which he speaks as essentially a need for a permanent love relationship. Martinson hypothesized that "persons who marry demonstrate greater feelings of ego deficiency than do persons who remain single (1955, p. 162).*

* Martinson found support for this hypothesis with female subjects (1955) but his results were due to using only young married persons who had married shortly after high school. When he used male subjects who had married at not so young an age(1959), no significant findings resulted.

Freud (1952) and Reik (1974) both saw love as reflecting the perception of unattained ideals in the other's person. They differ somewhat in emphasis in that Freud focused on a deflected (aim-inhibited) sex drive as supplying the energy for the projection, whereas Reik believed that ego needs can function independently of the libido.

The conception of love as an addiction is considered by one theorist as an example of personality inadequacy but by another as a basic human reaction.

Addiction is defined by Peele (1975) to exist "when a person's attachment to a sensation, an object, or another person is such as to lessen his appreciation of and ability to deal with other things in his environment, or in himself, so that he has become increasingly dependent on that experience as his only source of gratification" (p. 61). Peele draws parallels between the use of drugs and the use of another individual as an escape from one's self. A fear of interpersonal incompetence may drive one to use either a drug or a person as a buffer against anxiety.

The concept of love as an addiction is also developed by Solomon and Corbit (1974) as a part of their opponent-process theory of motivation, but it is explained as a natural human reaction. They state that most sensations are followed by opposite sensations. The fear engendered by the first parachute jump is turned to relief when (and if) the jump is successfully accomplished. With repeated practice the aftereffect becomes increasingly more potent and the effect itself less strong. A practiced jumper, therefore, has momentary and limited fear, almost better explained as nervous anticipation, followed by exhilaration after the jump.

Conversely, something that starts out intensely pleasurable, such as heroin, slowly loses its "high", but the aversive feeling of doing without it becomes so painful that the addict finds he needs it ever more while enjoying it ever less.

In sum, the term "inadequacy" is used differently from writer to writer. To Casler the need to love reflects a basic state of inadequacy, whereas inadequacy to theorists like Freud and Reik is presumably partial and intrinsic to the human condition in which we cannot fulfill all of his ideals.

Personality Adequacy

By far the vast majority of the populace and most writers assume that it is quite normal to love and that only the inadequate personality is unable to do so. Presumably, as noted earlier by Sullivan and Harlow among a host of others, this inadequacy stems from a failure of warmth, trust, security and tactile contact in the infant's relationship with the mother. Some theorists believe that the capacity and inclination to love stems from a superabundance of adequacy. Winch (1958) speaks about deficit needs leading to attraction to someone who can fulfill these needs, but he also speaks of surplus needs such as nurturance. An individual may be suffused with love which he needs to express towards others in general (as in saints) or towards a specific person.

Maslow (1954) and Lewis (1960) speak of the distinction between "deficit" love and "being" (Maslow) or "gift" (Lewis) love. From the foregoing it may be concluded that the need to love is not restricted to the inadequate personality but may emanate from the healthy personality as an inevitable concomitant of the energy available when one is freed from neurotic preoccupation with oneself.

Societal Norm

Up to this point love has been treated as a personal experience, but to restrict ourselves to the area of personality is to overlook the vested interest that society has in love and its frequent resultant, marriage.

Greenfield (1965) has argued that romantic love is a behavioral complex whose function is

> to motivate individuals -- where there is no other means of motivating them -- to occupy the positions husband-father and wife-mother and form nuclear families that are essential not only for reproduction and socialization but also to maintain the existing arrangements for distributing and consuming goods and services and, in general, to keep the social system in proper working order and thus maintaining it as a going concern (p. 377).

Greenfield believes it is necessary to motivate people because the roles of husband-father and wife-mother often involve more burden than gain to the individual. The interests of society may be opposed to his own. Thus he learns that there must be more to life than merely material considerations, and that "love" is what makes life meaningful. Accordingly, if he marries for "love," which almost everybody must do as a self-fulfilling prophecy, he will add this enriched dimension to his existence.

Physiological Arousal

A rather novel theory of passionate love has been presented by Walster (1971). Individuals are said to experience passionate love when:

1. they are intensely aroused physiologically, and
2. given the context in which the arousal takes place, "love" seems an appropriate label for these feelings.

The theory is derived from the work of Schachter (1964) and leans heavily on an experiment in which subjects were injected with epinephrine, a drug which increases systolic blood pressure, muscle and cerebral

blood flow, and heart rate among other changes. To the individual the experience is one of tremor of the hands, palpitation, more rapid breathing, and sometimes flushing. This type of reaction is generally experienced in a number of emotional states including fear, anxiety, anger, and the cardio-respiratory state of love or infatuation.

All the subjects were misled and told that they had received a new vitamin compound called Suproxin. In actuality, half of the subjects received epinephrine and half a placebo. Some of those receiving epinephrine were told of the actual effects which would ensue as a result of the injection, others were misled as to the symptoms (they were told that their feet would feel numb, they would itch and have a slight headache), and another group received no information about their "vitamin" shot.

Some of the participants were then subjected to a "euphoria" condition in which a confederate of the experimenter carried on in a madcap fashion shooting paper wads and dancing with a hula hoop. Other subjects in the "anger" condition filled out an insulting questionnaire containing questions which asked who bathed regularly in the family, who was under psychiatric care, and how many lovers the respondent's mother had had, of which the least response was "4 and under." The respondents watched a confederate become increasingly indignant and finally stomp out of the room after voicing his irritation. In accordance with the prediction, those subjects who received the epinephrine but no information as to its effect showed greater emotional arousal than

those who received placebos or who received the epinephrine but knew just what to expect. Generalizing from these data,Walster reasons that when the cognitive appraisal of the situation justifies an interpretation of love (as in the presence of an attractive member of the opposite sex), arousal, even from an independent source, may lead to the conclusion that one is in the throes of passionate love.

Evaluation of Theories on the Origin of Love

If we regard love as not necessarily promoting the growth of the beloved but as merely reflecting a strong emotional attachment generally accompanied by a sexual relationship, then considering personality inadequacy to be one of the origins of love can scarcely be questioned. Countless therapists have described the overwhelming dependence of their clients who fixate on, lean on and smother their mates, who serve as buffers against the anxiety of experienced inadequacy.

Whether adequately functioning personalities need to love someone is difficult to answer unless the meaning of "need" is clarified. If need is interpreted to mean "cannot function without," then the adequately functioning person can generally live without a specific loved one. She can engage in a multitude of satisfying but emotionally diffused relationships without having one intense, all-embracing relationship.

If we consider what is <u>preferred</u> rather than what is <u>necessary</u>, it would appear that most adequately functioning men seek love relationships, preferably those which might result in marriage, to nonlove ones. The work of Knupfer, Clark, and Room (1966) conclusively shows that single men (defined as past the age of 30), who might be expected to be less likely

to be involved in a love relationship than married men, were far more unhappy and unable to function adequately than married men. The evidence is unclear for single women as opposed to married women. Yet most single women prefer love relationships. They are, however, able to function better in the absence of such relationships than are men. But humans seem to function best when their emotional and sexual needs are fulfilled in a love relationship. Thus it seems logical to conclude that both the inadequate and adequate personalities seek and need love relationships, but the inadequate are much more dependent on such relationships to survive psychologically. Unfortunately, their lower number of assets and greater interpersonal liabilities make it less likely that they can attract a desirable individual into a love relationship.

Concerning the two theories of love as an addiction, I have some difficulty in accepting either theory. Peele's description rings psychologically true for certain kinds of individuals, but we would do violence to the concept of love to equate it with need for another individual as a palliative against anxiety. At least, however, Peele does differentiate between addictive and nonaddictive love. Solomon and Corbit's attempt to describe love in terms of an opponent-process theory is reductionism carried to the point of absurdity. As Peele has pointed out, it ignores cultural and personality factors and cannot account for those individuals who derive pleasure and enjoyment from interaction with loved ones but who do not find this pleasure diminishing with time, and who are not lost in the absence of their loved ones.

Thus, addiction theory serves a useful purpose in pointing out how dependency may mimic love in the need for the beloved, but it is hardly to be taken seriously as a definition of love.

Turning to the theory of passionate love several problems immediately present themselves. There has been no direct test of the passionate love theory, but Berscheid and Walster (1974) cite a number of studies which they believe provide tangential support. Many of these studies indicate that under threat of some kind, subjects were more attracted to confederates than under non-threat conditions. However, none of these students are reported as experiencing passionate love.

An interesting sidelight on the theory comes from the work of Valins (1966). He recruited male subjects who were told that their heart rate would be recorded while they examined photos of semi-nude Playboy bunnies. The feedback the participants received was of course false and predetermined by the experimenter. The subjects' hearts were reported as beating wildly in response to the perception of some pictures, whereas others allegedly left them cold. The respondents were asked which photographs they preferred, offered a photo as compensation for their work, and also interviewed a month later in another context in which they again evaluated the photos. In all cases the preference was for the photos which they thought had aroused them compared to those they thought they had been indifferent to.

Considering all of the evidence, little encouragement can be found for concluding that any of the aforementioned data has offered much support for the theory of passionate love. First, the research

cited as offering tangential support deals with attraction or liking, which can by no means be equated with passionate love. Second, many of these studies did not manipulate arousal but assumed it had taken place, often in response to threat. On the other hand, contrived boosts to self-esteem were arbitrarily assumed not to have involved arousal. In addition, Valin's work suggests that arousal is not necessary for attraction but serves only as a cue for cognitive evaluation. Thus, if an individual decided that hypnotic reverie was a result of his being in love he might interpret an almost complete lack of activation as a sign of love. In short, one would have to know each person's definition of passionate love before we might surmise how he would interpret any given interpersonal event. Once this concession is made, we can no longer speak of passionate love as an emotion but must consider it a cognition.

Last, a telling review of the passionate love literature by Kenrick and Cialdini (1977) indicates a more plausible explanation for most of the results, which seemingly favor a misattribution (passionate love) explanation. For example, an experiment by Dutton and Aron (1974) showed that men who had to cross a narrow swaying bridge with low guard rails involving a 230-foot drop to rocks and shallow rapids were more attracted to a female confederate of the experimenters than were male subjects interviewed on a sturdy bridge involving a mere 10-foot drop. However, unlike the Schachter studies, the subjects in this experiment clearly could not have misattributed their sweaty palms and increased heart rate as due to the female confederate's presence. Rather it seems more

logical to conclude that "enhanced attraction under aversive circumstances does not contradict reinforcement principles but can instead be seen as due to the effects of negative reinforcement (i.e., the termination or reduction of aversive stimuli" (Kenrick & Cialdini, 1977, p. 381). In short, the confederate served to distract the subjects' from their fears. This conclusion is consistent with Schachter's earlier work in which subjects expecting severe shock preferred to wait with others more frequently than did a control group (Schachter, 1959). In sum, the theory of passionate love lacks convincing support at the present time.

As regards the "Social Norm" theory, it seems to have some truth in it. Much of our economy is geared to the manufacture of marriages, children, and the goods that are needed to maintain the family. But Greenfield has his cause and effect mixed up. It is doubtful that people would invest themselves so extensively in love and marriage were it not satisfying very basic needs.

People do not merely adhere to norms simply because they have been inculcated with these norms. Adherence must yield benefits to the adherent, and when it no longer does conformity drops rapidly. The norm of premarital chastity carried weight as long as religious orthodoxy influenced everyday life, parents could effectively supervise and restrict their children's behavior, no effective peer culture existed to counteract parental influence, and little leisure time or opportunity existed for young people to get together. When the importance of these

influences waned, the rewards of nonconformity quickly made premarital sex the norm. The continued strength of love and marriage in our society indicates that the rewards for norm adherence still exist for a majority of persons, and that is why love and marriage continue to be accepted as traditional values.

In sum, the origins of love probably stem from human emotional interdependence. We are programmed that way from birth and the neurotic need love as much as the normal -- probably more so.

The Primary Intended Beneficiary of Love

This heading may appear needless. Is not the beloved the primary intended beneficiary? Actually, it might be safer to say only that the beloved is the main target of the lover. If the main purpose of his wooing is to remedy some deficit on his part, we may consider his love acquisitive. If it is to benefit the beloved in some way, we may speak of benevolent love. If the lover intends benefits to both himself and the beloved, we deal with mixed or acquisitive-benevolent love. It might seem that every definition of love would be located along this "mixed" axis, but a consideration of a number of definitions indicates that this is not the case. Consider first the acquistive theorists.

Acquisitive Love

In Plato's Symposium, Socrates, speaking to Agathon, says that "love is something which a man wants and has not"(Plato, 1952, p. 162). A careful reading of Plato makes it clear that love always has an object, implies a deficiency, and that the object invariably partakes of the good and the beautiful. Though we may love a person, according to

Plato, it is the essence of beauty* that draws us to him. In time, if we are fortunate, we move towards an increasingly higher level of functioning, leading us to an appreciation of the abstract concept of the physically beautiful. But that itself is but a stepping stone to an appreciation of the morally beautiful, which leads to an appreciation of the intellectually beautiful, and at last to an appreciation of the idea of beauty itself. Love is, thus, finally, the soul's dynamic attempt to achieve oneness with the source of its being.

The primary object of love is the abstract notion of beauty. Although human beings may contain traces of beauty, the focus is on the idea of beauty rather than on one of the many exemplars of beauty such as persons. Plato thus avoids the language of feeling -- bestowal of value, tenderness, warmth and caring. Sex is but a means of propagating the race and little more.

There is some hint in Plato that love may contain elements of benevolence. For example, love is said to be intermediate between the divine and the mortal. Although the Platonian God has no personal interest in mankind, the mortal aspect of love might refer to nurturing others, and philosophers, who in the Platonistic way of thinking are superior to the rest of mankind because they are more sensitive to and more involved in the search for wisdom and beauty than the rest of us, enjoy teaching the less advanced the joys of knowledge of beauty. Thus, there is the possibility of conferring good on others in Plato's philosophy though, considering the totality of his writings, it is rather

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* Beauty and Good are synonymous in Platonic thinking.

muted. Love seems to be within the realm of judgment in Platonic love rather than feeling and behavior (The idea of beauty is the chief passion).

The concept of love as acquisitive is contained in the writings of a multitude of other theorists and theories, but I can mention only a sample: Ovid, Freud, Winch, Learning Theory, Courtly Love, Love as Pathology, and Love as Addiction. To Ovid (1931) love is essentially a sexual (behavior) sport in which duplicity is used in order for a man to win his way into a woman's heart and subsequently into her boudoir. Andrew Capellanus, whose The Art of Courtly Love (1959) is our chief treatise on this twelfth century art form, defined love as "a certain inborn suffering derived from the sight of an excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex" (p. 28). The cure is "the embraces of the other." Thus love for him is acquisitive.

Freud. Freud's description of love is likewise acquisitive but much more detailed. Love is at its core the desire for sexual union (Freud, 1952). When the desire is blocked, and when the object desired also possesses many qualities which the ego has aspired to but not attained, we find not only a sexual overestimation of the object but that the object serves as a substitute for the unattained ego-ideal. The subject falls in love and idealizes the object. But once the sexual aim is achieved through coitus, love ought to extinguish. However, Freud knew that this was not always the case. How did love survive? According to Freud the individual "could calculate with certainty upon the revival of the need ... and this is the first motive for directing

a lasting cathexis upon the sexual object and for loving it in the passionless intervals as well" (Freud, 1952, p. 681).

Such feelings as tenderness, affection and the like thus tie individuals together during passionless moments. Tender feelings also may result from completely blocked sexual aims. The love between brothers and sisters and parents and children is also aim-inhibited sensual love, maintaining its sensual connection only in the unconscious mind. In sum, Freud acknowledges the presence of benevolent wishes in individuals (e.g. tenderness), but since these are derivatives of sensual desire, which is essentially acquisitive in nature, it seems justifiable to classify Freud among those seeing love as an acquistive drive.

Learning Theory. In their book Loving, Miller and Siegel (1972) attempt to explain that love is a learned response. Specifically, "Love is a response to a generalized hope signal, a broad pleasurable expectancy. The love object be it a 'thing' or a person, is a generalized, secondary, positive reinforcer" (Miller & Siegel, 1972, pp. 14-15). This translates from jargon as follows: In association with the beloved, the lover experiences warm, pleasant, "good" feelings and often relief from doubts, fears and the like. What is primarily satisfying is the pleasant feeling (primary reinforcement). However, these pleasant feelings do not just happen. They occur only when the beloved is present. Hence the beloved becomes a secondary positive reinforcer which is to say that the beloved's presence is associated with these good feelings and his appearance becomes a hope signal that pleasant feelings are forthcoming.

This definition clearly falls into our acquisitive-behavior framework because the benefits accrue to the lover and a response is the operational manifestation of love. If the lover ceased to enjoy the presence of the beloved, he could terminate the relationship. By definition the hope signal remains a hope signal because of the benefits to the lover. There is, however, no reason why the beloved cannot also be acquiring benefits through his own responses.

Benevolence

If the purpose of love is defined as aiding, protecting, or improving other persons, if the inclination is to give rather than to get, to seek good for another person rather than for oneself, we are dealing with benevolent love (Hazo, 1967). In its purest form such love was referred to as agape and it was said to flow from God to man, infusing man's life with a radiance which led to salvation (Nygren, 1953). Its chief characteristics were that a) it was spontaneous and unmotivated by personal considerations and needs, b) it was indifferent to value -- a beggar could be loved as readily as a king, a monster as much as a saint, c) creative, and d) it was an initiator of fellowship with God.

The leading exponent of agape as a mode of life was Martin Luther. To him man was but a tube through which the sacred fluid of God's love flowed (Singer, 1967). But to achieve this love man must renounce self-interest totally. "Good works" as a ladder to heaven is totally rejected. It is too presumptuous to pretend that one can achieve a fellowship with God on quasi-equal terms. One must confess total worth-

lessness and become the instrument of God's will.

It is questionable how many persons would qualify for the role of agapean lover. I can think only of Jesus, and according to most Christian belief, Jesus was not a person but a manifestation of the Godhead. On a human level, therefore, I shall content myself with considerations of love that are primarily other-oriented but which are not necessarily devoid of secondary gains for the lover. Within the confines of this definition of benevolence, he could, for example, be permitted such recompense for his love as feelings of satisfaction, moral improvement, and recognition by the other of his love. With this "relaxed" model of love there is no dearth of suitable definitions by others which might be considered benevolent.

Eric Fromm -- "the active concern for the life and growth of that which we love" (1956, p. 22).

Leibniz -- to love is to be inclined to take pleasure in the complete perfection of happiness of the object loved (Hazo, 1967, p. 378).

Ortega y Gasset -- the affirmation of another person for himself (Ortega y Gasset, 1957).

Love as a Mixture of Acquisitiveness and Benevolence

If love is assumed and intended to benefit each partner to a more or less equal degree, we deal with a mixture of acquisitiveness and benevolence. The following writers' definitions can be thus classified.

May -- A delight in the presence of the other person and an affirming of his value and development as much as one's own (1953, p. 241).

Montagu -- The relationship between persons in which they confer mutual benefits on each other (1975, p. 7).

Foote -- The relationship between one person and another which is most conducive to the optimal growth of both (1953, p. 246).

It should be noted that the definitions cited accord with the subjective aim of the individual though the objective outcome may be different than intended. Thus, a mother may intend benefit to her child by excessive pampering in order not to dampen his "individualism," but the result to the outside observer may be a spoiled brat. Conversely, it is conceivable that less than altruistic motivations may nevertheless result in beneficial personal growth.

Evaluation of Categorization by Intended Primary Beneficiary

Although differentiating definitions of love as acquisitiveness, benevolence, or mixed aids in distinguishing among the definitions of various theorists, this classificatory scheme becomes more complex when we try to assign value to these goals. It was noted earlier that an acquisitive need to possess another might also involve the need to nurture the other. Thus acquisition can also involve benevolence. It was also noted earlier that benevolent intentions might turn out badly and in fact might involve rationalization to cloak possessive (acquisitive behavior). A further problem lies in ascertaining what is primary and what is secondary. When Albert Schweitzer consecrated his life to establishing a hospital for Africans, he undoubtedly took pride or at least pleasure in the thought of what he had done and in the accolades tendered him by the admiring world.

If his primary goal was fame and the hospital was a means to it, then his love for the sick was acquisitive. If, however, he primarily cared for the sick, then his primary love was benevolent, although we could not begrudge him the secondary gain of satisfaction. But who could tell what lay in his heart? Moreover, how could one measure units of praise received against units of affection given to others?

Last, the categorization by intended beneficiary does not allow for contingency behaviors. An individual may start out by intending wholly acquisitive behavior but may respond to the modeling effect of benevolent love exhibited by his partner by modifying his own "love" more towards the benevolent continuum. Thus, categorization by intended beneficiary seems static, difficult to pinpoint, and has little to contribute towards an understanding of love.

The Nature of Love

Love has been said to involve a host of characteristics such as altruism, intimacy, admiration, respect, sharing, confiding, acceptance, pride in the other, unity, exclusive preoccupation etc. (Scoresby, 1977; Symonds, 1976; Turner, 1970). Each characteristic, however, can be classified by mode of expression as a <u>behavior</u>, <u>judgment</u>, or <u>feeling</u>.

For those who consider love as behavior the key word is response. Love may be caring for another, responding to her needs, expressing affection in a physical sense, gazing at the beloved a long time.

Writers considering love as a judgment focus on esteem (someone is good in himself/herself) or valuation (someone is good for me) (Hazo, 1967).

Love measured as an attitude would fall under the rubric of judgment, though the attitude might be derived from evaluation of behavior or feeling.

Love as a feeling presupposes some physiological correlate, though this may not be readily measurable. Cardio-respiratory love with sweating, tremor, and heart palpitations in the presence of the beloved would be a classic example of love as feeling. The dean of American behaviorists, John B. Watson, thought of love as "an innate emotion elicited by cutaneous stimulation of the erogeneous zones" (Harlow, 1958, p. 17). However, the sensations might be more subtle as in hynoptic or dream-like reveries of the beloved. A definition of love need not be limited to but one of these three possibilities but might include any two or three of these components in varying interactions.

Evaluation of Concepts of Nature of Love

Love As A Feeling

When one feels in love one is generally sure it is love! The feeling of being in love was described by the majority of a sample of college women "as the most important thing in the world" (Ellis, 1950). Many a courtship declaration has begun with such phrases as "The love that I feel for you ..." But feelings are tremendously variable. Today's passionate love may be regarded tomorrow as yesterday's infatuation. Indeed the difference between love and infatuation may well be that a successful love affair, perhaps one leading to marriage, is retrospectively declared to be true love, whereas if one is rebuffed, retrospection, in

defense of ego, declares the relationship to have been only an infatuation.

In everyday marriage there are times when the spouses may be highly irritated or angry with each other. Should we declare them to be out of love and only reinstate them in love's kingdom if and when they have kissed and made up? If so, we would have to acknowledge that at any given moment considerable numbers of individuals are shifting positions of being in or out of love. I believe, therefore, that feelings are too unstable a criterion to use as an index of love.

Is Love An Attitude?

Many writers have considered love as an attitude. Fromm, for example, states that love is "an attitude, or orientation of character which determines the relatedness of a person to the world as a whole, not toward one 'object' of love" (1956, p. 38). Rubin (1970) has constructed an attitude scale in which the higher one scores, the more one's attitude is said to be that of romantic love. Rubin (1970) defines romantic love as "love between unmarried opposite-sex peers, of the sort which could possibly lead to marriage" (p. 266). This definition suffers from such problems as impreciseness ("love ... which could possibly lead to marriage") (italics mine). I am reminded of a talk given by Edward Shneidman in which he paused in the middle of his assessment of a case and said "I suppose some of you may be saying isn't Mr. "A" (the case in question) a latent homosexual? I would remind you that all of us here are "latent" homosexuals, except, of course, those of us here who are practicing homosexuals". In short, love which possibly could lead to marriage also

probably could not, which does not clarify matters very much. That romantic love is defined as something that could lead to marriage is tautologous because romantic love has no separate meaning of its own. Its existence is defined by its consequence.

A further difficulty with these conceptions of love is that, even with very high scores, we find that some individuals would persist in saying that they are not in love. Conversely, some individuals with low scores may, nevertheless, persist in saying that they love the individual in question. In employing attitude on a scale as the criterion of love, therefore, we risk to some degree misclassifying some individuals if we take their statement that they love or do not love someone as the ultimate criterion.

Another problem is that attitude as measured by love scales yields continuous scores, but the behavioral correlates of these quantified attitudes may not be continuous at all. For example, a woman with a love score of 80 on a scale of 0 to 100 may decide that she likes but does not love Samuel Swain. She meets Wolfgang Wooer and achieves a score of 82. This score represents a crossing of a decision threshold. She decides she <u>loves</u> Wolfgang. Whereas Samuel Swain was a "buddy", she moves in with Wolfgang Wooer, shares expenses, housework, sleeps with him, and does his shirts -- all because she "loves" him.

Love As Behavior?

Exactly the same problem we encountered with the use of attitude as a criterion of love is apparent in the use of behavior as a criterion. Some individuals may engage in what seems very unloving behavior towards another person such as cuffing them about the head a bit, but then avow that they truly love that person. Others may behave very lovingly towards another but disclaim the label of loving -- "we're just good friends."

There is yet another difficulty in using attitude and behavior viewed by an outsider as criteria of love. It assumes that we or the test constructor know what love is even if the individual in question does not. We thus superimpose our standards of what love is over his, which may leave him far from satisfied with our definition.

Love As Judgment

Since love can not be reduced to feeling or behavior, it falls under the rubric of personal judgment. This judgment by the individual concerned may draw upon feelings and behaviors by himself and/or the potential loved one, but its essence is a cognitive decision by the individual herself that she is in love. This decision may be based on conscious criteria against which the partner is compared, or the comparison may be implicit. The implications are far reaching to the individual, for to acknowledge such a state of affairs is in effect, as I have noted earlier, to program themselves to behave in a certain way towards the beloved. Henceforth, certain attitudes as well as expectations may be held with respect to the beloved, and the lovers may even expect that certain feelings on the part of the self and partner should now be in evidence.

It is true that these feelings, attitudes, and behavior may have been present and led to the conclusion that the individual was in love but it is also true that the decision to consider oneself in love may in turn produce new feelings, attitudes, and behavior. For example, a woman may feel that it is wrong to have sexual relations with a man whom she does not love, but if she decides that she loves him, that is another matter.

Let us sum up the advantages and disadvantages of each mode for defining love. If feeling is employed as the criterion, the experience of love may seem very clear to the individual experiencing it, but when the feeling is absent the love must be declared officially dead, though the feeling may return later on, in which case the individual is said to love again. If attitude is employed, there is question as to who sets the criterion of love. If it is an outsider, as in a scale, the test-taker's evaluation may differ from that of the outsider. If the individual himself sets the criterion, he must decide when sufficient positive attitudes have accrued to call his condition "love." Once he decides that, however, he has in essence made a cognitive decision.

If behavior is the criterion, one must disregard feelings and even cognitive decisions and work backwards judging whether one loved or not by the behavior that followed. However, much loving behavior will result from labeling oneself as in love or declaring one's love to another. Thus it may be difficult to tell whether one loved prior to the behavior or as a result of it. Finally, in arguing that love results from a decision to bestow one's love on another, we avoid some of the difficulties

inherent in defining love as a feeling or attitude. There is nothing immutable in a decision that one loves, as the history of human relationships must surely indicate. Individuals may decide in view of feedback from others and themselves that they were mistaken when they thought they loved, or they may acknowledge that they once loved the other but no longer do now. They may arrive at such a conclusion by referring to feelings, attitudes, or behavior, but the evaluation of their present state is still a conscious decision.

The Developmental Stages of Love

Writers on love generally speak of two kinds of heterosexual love: romantic love and conjugal love.* The former is described as being more intense than the latter. An almost invariant major correlate of this intensity is that the members of the couple have not known each other very long, or, if the relationship is of long standing, circumstances have presented frequent or intimate interaction. A sexual component is assumed to underly this intensity although it may be completely covert. In the absence of much real knowledge of the other, each may project his fantasized ideal qualities onto the other. Thus, the qualities of the beloved are apt to be exaggerated, there is an emphasis of attention on the beloved and on the experience of love to the exclusion of almost everything else, there is much sentiment, often bathetic, there is an omnipresent, insatiable need to be with the beloved though circumstances often prevent it, and there is passion and sexual desire. When the

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* Homosexual relationships, of course, can also be of the romantic or conjugal type.

focus is on the passion more than the other components, the term passionate love may be employed instead of romantic love.

Conjugal love, the less intense form of love, is what happens to a couple after marriage, or more correctly after they have come to know each other well, which can occur before marriage if the courtship has been an extended one. With access to each other without impediment and as a result of habituation, bit by bit generalized, overriding passion and longing evaporate and are replaced by liking or trust, although in good marriages, passion may return on specific occasions. Almost with a sigh of relief the couple turn back to the business of life. Conjugal love, however, does not imply indifference to each other. Rather, the couple are presumably building more stable and permanent bonds of affection and trust based on increasing, real knowledge of the other which replaces fantasy. Out of the evolving network of shared experiences as a couple, children, family, married life, comes something less ephemeral and more permanent than romantic love. Consideration, courtesy and gallantry may persist, but the terrible need for the other at every possible moment, and the emotional intoxication in the presence or at the thought of the other becomes a thing of the past.

Evaluation of the Developmental Stages of Love

The perception of at least two stages of love seems to accord with common observation. Recent empirical research has supported the belief that loving and trust are more highly correlated for married couples than for unmarried ones (Driscoll, Davis & Lipetz, 1972; Dion & Dion, 1976).

Knox (1970), however, reported that couples married more than 20 years scored higher on romantic love than those married 5 years. The sample of those married 20 years, however, probably reflects a selective influence in which the survivors (nondivorced) are more apt to be happier and to have better relationships than the typical couple married only five years, who have yet to face many of the trials that the longer married couples have passed through. Moreover, inspection of Knox's items reveals that what he means by romanticism is mainly idealization of the partner in addition to a belief in the eternity of love. The concept of romantic love that I hold, however, includes also an emphasis on passion and the physical. Thus, the Knox data are not really in conflict with the two stage concept of love, and it appears validated by the research to date.

Accuracy -- A Dimension Not Considered

We have up to this point bypassed consideration of the question which many people have pondered in their own personal lives. How do you determine whether the love one experiences is based on reality or on distortion? Some extremely distinguished writers think of love as essentially artifact. Stendahl (pseudonym of Henri Beyle) in his book On Love (1947) noted that passion was a subjective experience that led to distortion. He had once observed that a bare bough of a tree which fell into a salt pit and lay there for some time acquired a covering of brilliant crystals when it was extracted. The shabby branch appeared at first glance to be a priceless objet d'art, but in reality it was worthless.

He drew an analogy to the experience of love, which he called crystallization. Love was a fantasy, a projection of the individual's ego-ideal onto the often undeserving object. When reality intrudes, crystallization ends and so does love.

Freud (1952) saw love as aim-inhibited sex and thus in essence distortion, and Schopenauer (1964) saw it as a device of Nature for propagation. On the other hand, the vast majority of writers, as we have seen, do not think of love as basically self or partner-deception.

The reason that it seems fruitless to pursue this avenue further is that it is impossible to tell at the time that love is experienced whether it is based on reality, deception or some combination of the two. It should be noted also that self-deception in any event is not necessarily a precursor of unhappiness. A tendency to exaggerate the spouse's attributes is characteristic of happy marriages (Kelly, 1941; Murstein & Beck, 1972), and may continue for the entire course of the marriage.

Empirical Research on Taxonomies on Love

A review of the research on love sheds little light on the taxonomy of love because few researchers have concerned themselves with this topic. There have been a number of factor analyses (Knox & Sporakowski, 1968; Dion & Dion, 1973; Swensen, 1972; Swensen & Gilner, 1964; Swensen, 1961; Rubin, 1970; Dunkel, 1974) and a least-space analysis (Lasswell & Lasswell, 1976) but this work has dealt with content and perspectives that had only modest bearing on isolating the dimensions of love as considered here. The factor analyses, however, often result in a very strong general first factor. The factor analysis by Dunkel (1974) for example, showed the first factor to account for three and one-half times more variance (21%) than the second factor (6%). The first factor, "Unselfish Caring", involved consideration, togetherness, helpfulness, encouragement and listening to each other. The second factor was labelled "Cognitive Absorption and Preoccupation with the Beloved" and the third (5% of variance) was labelled "Physical Interaction -- Sensuality." Pretty much the same factorial pattern emerged in my own factor analyses of ideal-spouse expectations * (Murstein, 1966). The major factor for men was called "Madonna" because of the superperfect qualities that the woman ought to possess. For women the primary factor was"Jack Armstrong" after the legendary perfect hero of radio fame. These analyses point to the fact that verbal behavior expressing feeling

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* I again assume that ideal-spouse expectations relate to behaviors which radiate love.

or love is at the heart of love, and that was also the first factor extracted in the Swensen factor analyses.

The problem of what love is was attacked somewhat differently in a multicorrelational study I did which correlated a wide variety of personalogical, cultural, and physical variables with courtship progress made by a couple in the six months after the testing (Murstein, 1976). For a sample of 99 couples representing the most extensive testing (Group III), the variable correlating most highly with courtship progress was "My partner understands me" (by the man). The highest four of the top five variables were, for both men and women, being understood by the partner and understanding the partner. Other variables correlating significantly with courtship progress had to do with sexual compatibility and the congruence of perceptions such that one member of the couple could accurately predict and also confirm the self and ideal perceptions of the other.

If I can assume that courtship progress represented the flourishing of love then I can venture a definition of love that might be construed from the participants' responses.

Primary to the experience or decision of loving is the belief that the partner understands the individual. Only slightly less important is the feeling of satisfaction and competence stemming from the belief that one understands the partner. But in addition to understanding and being understood, there should be the belief that one is accepted for what one is (confirmation of the self image) and what one aspires to be and

accomplish (ideal-self). One of the chief content areas for the respondents in my research in which understanding, acceptance, and competence lead to loving is in sexual relations.

In sum, empirical research on the dimensions of love points to a large general factor of love dependent on a cognitive evaluation that one is understood and a feeling of competency and involvement in understanding the other. Feeling seems dependent on cognition rather than vice versa, and behavior apart from verbalized behavior of acceptance also would appear to play a secondary role.

Summary and Conclusion

We started out by asking whether categorizing the sources of love would lead to a greater understanding of the concept of love and found that it did not, since both normal and neurotic personalities crave love. Despite the fact that the major portion of a treatise on love (Hazo, 1967) devotes itself to a consideration of "tendence" in love (i.e. acquisitive, benevolent, acquisitive-benevolent), this categorization of the intended primary beneficiary was also judged to be of little value in understanding love. Next, we considered whether love was a feeling, behavior or decision and decided that it was best understood as a decision, although individuals might rely on feelings and behavior as data for arriving at the decision. At this point the two developmental stages of love were discussed, and the research evidence, however skimpy, tended to support this conceptualization.

A review of the empirical literature on the dimensions of love lead to the conclusion that love was essentially unitary and determined on the basis of verbalized reinforcing behavior. At this point I reviewed my own research in this area which accorded with the aforementioned conclusions, and I proferred a definition of love based on my research.

What then are the possible uses of a taxonomical approach to love? Primarily it serves to tell us how varied, imprecise, and complex the concept of love is. It is clear that a simple taxonomy of love, such as presented here, allows a good deal of the essence of love to get lost within such gross categories as "feeling" and "behavior." Subsequent

approaches might well focus on developing further subdivision within any of the dimensions described in this paper.

Even acknowledging the crude categorizations used, they do easily pinpoint the number of diverse definitions of love that exist. I suspect that it would be futile to attempt to select one definition of love that would satisfy even a substantial minority of workers in the field. A taxonomy, nevertheless, readily shows in what way a given definition of love differs from another. It becomes possible therefore to communicate these differences and to study their behavioral correlates. Does it make a difference if Mr. A, who defines love as promoting the welfare and growth of his spouse, especially by material behavior (i.e. getting his wife well stocked with appliances), differs from Mrs. A who thinks that love is experiencing a glow all over when you think of your spouse (feeling)? Are similar definitions of love conducive to marriage adjustment or to the longevity of a relationship? Does emotional feeling for another exist independently of believing that one is understood? Can one think oneself understood and accepted and yet not experience a feeling of love for the other? Which behaviors lead to a belief that one is understood and accepted? These are the sorts of questions that the search for a taxonomy opens up, and current investigations of the different facets of love are only the beginning. A generation ago Harry Harlow (1958) remarked that most psychologists, as far as their work was concerned, could live without love and they deserved it. It is doubtful that any future psychologist will be able to ignore this growing area of psychology if he hopes to call himself a clinical or social psychologist.

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